

LISTING OF CLAIMS

The claims are unchanged from the previously submitted Amendment:

1-18. (Cancelled.)

19.(Previously Presented) A method for programming a voltage threshold (V_t) level of a core cell in a memory device, the method comprising steps of:

determining a desired V_t for the core cell;

programming a portion of the V_t of the core cell using a selected programming strength;

verifying that the portion of the V_t is successfully programmed;

adjusting the selected programming strength; and

repeating the step of programming, verifying, and adjusting until the V_t of the core cell is substantially equal to the desired V_t .

20.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, further comprising, after the step of verifying, a step of returning to the step of programming using the selected programming strength if it is determined that the portion of the V_t was unsuccessfully programmed.

21.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of adjusting is a step of weakening the selected programming strength.

22.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of adjusting is a step of weakening the selected programming strength as the V_t of the core cell approaches the desired V_t .

23.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of adjusting is a step of weakening the selected programming strength after each successful steep of verifying.

24.(Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of adjusting comprises steps of:

using the same selected programming strength for a first selected number of programming steps; and

weakening the programming strength for a second selected number of programming steps.